

# What's Going On?

December 2003

*A Report to the Honorable Mayor and City Council*

## CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

### Grooming Our Future Leaders

Approximately 230 A&M Consolidated High School students toured the College Station's City facilities. This tour included a visit to City Hall, Fire Station #2, the Police Department, Public Works, Utilities Service Center, Veteran's Park and the Rock Prairie Road Land-fill.

The purpose of the day-long event was to introduce high school juniors and seniors to local government. Each designation had speakers to inform the students about local government. City Hall speakers included the City Manager's Office, Human Resources, and Development Services.



City Manager Tom Brymer, speaks to students about the importance of local government.

This was the first time for students to tour and visit City facilities on City Education Day. The day was considered a success by many. Community Programs Coordinator Peggy Calliham, stated "People take their city government for granted, they do

not realize how much their involvement, their vote, their input can make a difference... We have taken this opportunity to help these kids understand a little bit, as they get out in cities of their own, this is the closest place they can make a difference by getting involved."

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### 2003 G.O. Bonds Projects Scheduled

On December 18, 2003, the City Council approved a six-year schedule for spending \$38.4 million in capital improvement projects that voters approved in the November bond election. One of the first projects scheduled is the remodeling and expansion of the Police Department Building. Also included in the bond package, is the first phase of the new City Center project, Fire Station #3 relocation, Veterans Park Phase II, several streets and transportation projects. Among the streets and transportation projects are:

Barron Road improvements, Rock Prairie Road design and right of way acquisition, Greens Prairie Road widening Phase II, Northgate Street rehabilitation and pedestrian improvements on University Drive. Traffic signals and safety system improvements are also included in this package. Two signals are scheduled to be installed in 2003-2004, and three signals will be replaced every year after that until 2008-2009. Council will revisit the schedule every year and modify it as necessary.

Year	Spending	Significant Projects
2003-04	\$6.1 million	Police Station New Addition, Fire Station #3
2004-05	\$5.7 million	Streets Projects, Fire Station #3
2005-06	\$7.9 million	Veteran's Park Ph. II, City Centre Building
2006-07	\$7.9 million	Veteran's Park, City Centre, Forestry Shop
2007-08	\$6.5 million	Streets Projects (including Northgate Streets)
2008-09	\$4.2 million	Streets Projects (including Rock Prairie Rd)

## Employees Demonstrate their Holiday Spirit

Christmas is about giving and sharing. That's what City employees believe and have displayed this Christmas season. From Toys for Tots to the Food Drive, employees exercised the true spirit of Christmas this year.

This year, the City provided the Brazos Food Bank with \$1,863.20 and 1,804 lbs of food. Brenda Martz, led the effort by chairing the City's collection of food and money for the annual Food Drive.

Employees also collected money for the Salvation Army, by ringing the bell in front of SAM'S and the Wal-Mart in College Station. Gina Jamison, Joyce Duda, Charles Wood, Ed Savage, Cheryl Turney, Lance Simms, Mark Smith, Laura Perry, Charles Cryan, Julie O'Connell,

Lance Jackson, Debbie Eller, Kris Keller, Angela Daugherty, and Mike Gutowski volunteered their time to this great cause. Their efforts are appreciated.

The Fire Department continued their traditional CSFD Toy Drive. Kim Varner spearheaded this project for the families of firefighters, in conjunction with the annual Radio MASH (Make a Smile Happen) event at the Post Oak Mall. Through the local media and city network, samaritans were encouraged to drop off their new or gently used toys to their local fire stations. This was a huge success.



A "Legal" Christmas Tree. Brenda Godfrey, of the Legal division, decorated this beautiful tree.

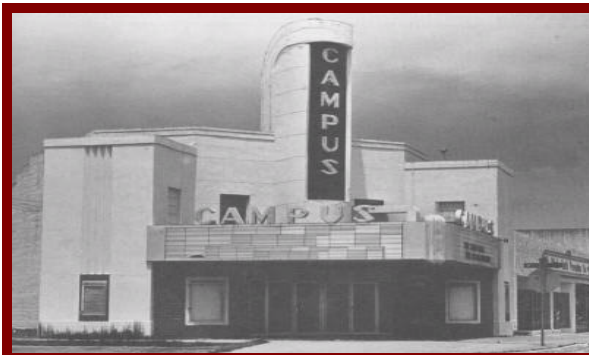
## College Station Utilities Lights the Way In Holiday Parade...Again!

The Annual Holiday Parade was held December 7, 2003 and similar to last year, CSU employees went all out to win. Receiving first place in their category of large commercial, and a special Judge's Award for Best Entry for Adherence to the Theme," A Hollywood Christmas." Employees are still contemplating where their \$300.00 cash award will best serve the community. Last year's award was split between the Brazos Food Bank and the Salvation Army.

Their entry "Lights, Camera, Action ... A Christmas Classic" featured Len Jenicek's and Augie Palmisano's depiction of the old Campus Theatre lo-

cated in Northgate at Church Street and University (currently known as Shadow Canyon). The float's striking details included a ticket booth, concession stand, actual theatre seats and a big screen featuring Jimmy Stewart and Donna Reed in the Christmas classic "It's A Wonderful Life". Besides the clever design, most striking was the 1940's costume and hair design and the use of only the colors black, white and gray (including flowers and popcorn boxes), to simulate the era of black and white movies. The winning performance started with introduction music to the movie, while moviegoers purchased tickets,

popcorn and colas. The performance concluded with the viewers "watching" the movie, which included numerous recognizable quotes from the classic movie. Float participants were Tony Michalsky, Augie and Ariel Palmisano, Brandy Irish, Preston Jenicek, April Irish and Chris Gonzales, III. Perhaps the best part of the event was the recognition on the faces of parade watchers as they were reminded of a day when perhaps they had seen "It's A Wonderful Life" in the Campus Theatre.



## Gainsharing Checks Distributed to Employees

A gainsharing check, in the gross amount of \$212.00 was distributed to eligible employees on December 12, 2003. The City was able to provide a gainsharing check to employees this year because of savings in expenditures throughout the City. Gainsharing is designed to promote teamwork, and foster an environment that encourages cost savings and efficiency through the use of creative and innovative approaches to service delivery. It also rewards a daily effort to reduce costs and find a better way to deliver services. When delivery of city services results in a cost less than budgeted, the program shares a portion of that savings with the employees who helped generate the savings. This is the sev-

enth year of the gainsharing program. Monies saved through implementing employees' continuous improvement

**A gross amount of \$212 was distributed to eligible employees on December 12th.**

ideas, and by savings realized on a daily basis are compiled at the end of the year and identified as Gainsharing. Of this money, two-thirds is given back to the citizens of College Station by keeping the money in the

fund where it was saved for future City projects, and one-third is distributed to eligible City employees.



## GIS Web Application Serves as a Useful Tool

The College Station Geographic Information Services has developed a web based application to facilitate use of GIS information.

The application was written internally and primarily designed for use by internal staff. Although the application was designed for staff use, it also receives heavy use from citizens and external organizations. The site is currently receiving almost 50,000 map requests per month.

The application is easily tailored for individual departments. A set of GIS "Lego blocks" has been created that can be used to build future applications. Customized versions of the application are already in use by Water/Wastewater, Code Enforcement, Fire, Community Development, Budget, and Utility Customer Service. Several other areas are using a generalized version of the application. At least two A&M



**College Station GIS Mapping Application**

Professors are using it in their classrooms. After learning that the application was being used by appraisers at the Brazos County Appraisal District, a customized version was created for them. Much of the City's GIS information originates from the Appraisal District,

so this has benefits for both organizations.

The application also enhances information sharing between departments. For instance, Code Enforcement has a need know where Community Development's rehab projects are located. The Community Development GIS "Lego blocks" were quickly added to the Code Enforcement website.

The goal of this project was to create an easy to use application that provides a single interface to view information from all corners of the organization. The application allows for very quick searching and display of information.



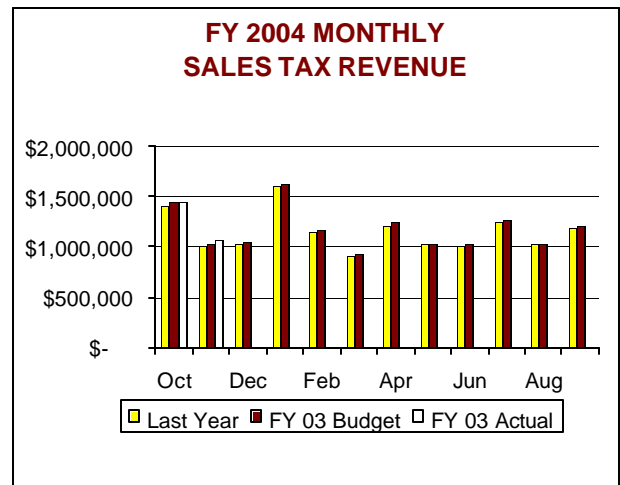
## Local Sales Tax Receipts

The City collected **\$1,067,387.16** for the month of November, **5.62%** above the same month last year. The November receipts are for sales that occurred in October.

Sales tax collections for FY 04 YTD are **\$2,507,478.48** or **3.60%** above FY 03 collections. Sales tax receipts are higher than the same month last year. Sales tax receipts have increased by 2.82% when comparing the last

12 months to the previous 12 months.

This is positive given the overall statewide decline in sales tax revenues. Sales tax is projected to grow 2% in FY 04.



## Permits are up from 2002

Eleven months into the calendar year, and permitting activity seems to be up as compared to 2002, which is as follows: While Single-Family permits were down 5.6%, duplex units have increased 33%, over last year-to-date.

Apartment units are also up 39% from the same period last year.

Although commercial construction still lags behind last year's total by 9.2%, the total reported construction is up over last year almost \$40 million or 31.5%.

With news of the recovering economy and continued low interest rates, experts are predicting sustained housing construction and an

increase in commercial construction.

## Longmire and Dartmouth Get New Overlays

On November 13, City Council approved a contract with Young Contractors that included the rehabilitation of a portion of Longmire Drive. The section under contract extends from about 500 feet north of Longmire's intersection with Deacon southward to Longmire's intersection with Ponderosa Drive.

The contract includes removal of the existing pavement, stabilizing the pavement's base with 5% portland cement and then applying a new asphalt overlay.

In addition to this contract, City street maintenance crews have made spot repairs to the section of Longmire between the rehab project's limit and Harvey Mitchell Parkway (FM 2818). Once the spot

repairs were completed the outside lanes were milled to allow for a new asphalt overlay of this section of Longmire.

The end result of all of this work will be a much improved roadway. Longmire is one College Station's busiest collector streets.

In addition to Longmire, an overlay of Dartmouth Drive between Harvey Road and Holleman was completed

earlier this month. City crews made point repairs and milled the outside lane to prepare for the overlay.

The overlay was installed by Young Contractors at a cost of about \$56,000. The annual contract for asphalt overlays was approved by the City Council on October 9, 2003.



## City of College Station

1101 Texas Avenue  
College Station, TX 77845  
Email: [cmo@cstx.gov](mailto:cmo@cstx.gov)



*College Station.  
Embracing the Past,  
Exploring the Future.*

## SHINING MOMENTS

- *Chrissy Hester, the principal of A&M Consolidated High School, thanked Mike Mullen for his role in the City Government Education Day, "We all learned a lot and it also gave all of us a much deeper appreciation of the city and all that it does for everyone. Again, the different activities and the whole process were excellent. I do appreciate working with you."*
- *Charlene Taylor, a resident, thanked David Dobbs and Glenn Jackson for assisting her with her driveway issue and her garbage collection. She appreciated their good-will.*
- *The City of College Station has been designated as a Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Cyclists.*
- *Sergeant Donnie Andreski will be reporting to the Criminal Investigations Division on January 5, 2004 as the newest CID Supervisor.*
- *The College Station Police Department's Record Division recently received a certificate of appreciation from MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) for the Division's contribution in enhancing victim services.*
- *Boy Scout Troop 976 sent thanks to Ann Hazlett, Curtis Bingham, Helen Banks, Kris Lehde, Pam Springfield, Paul Rucker and Steve Beachy for their help in making the November 11th flag retirement ceremony a success. They were also thanked for the use of Richard Carter Park, for mowing the park beforehand, and for providing a plentiful supply of flags.*
- *Bill Cody, the City's Risk Manager, has been elected to the Board of Directors for the Texas Chapter of the Public Risk Managers Association (PRIMA).*
- *Chris Haver and Susan Stanley received a letter of appreciation from a resident whom they helped to get a building permit. The resident stated, "I wanted to let you know that I appreciate their kindness and professionalism. It's nice to know that these people and your department can take the time to help the average citizen."*

## Christmas in the Park, A College Station Tradition

This year's lighting ceremony began at 6:30 p.m. on December 5. The Park remained lit each night through New Year's Eve, with special Open House Events on December 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, and 20, from 6 - 9 p.m.

*Christmas in the Park* began in 1984 as a vision of College Station Forestry Superintendent Ric Ploeger (now Assistant Director of the Parks and Recreation Department). That year over 18,000 lights decorated the 47-acre park to the delight of thousands of area residents. The idea became a reality with financial backing from the Jack Lester Jr. family. The Lester family continued to fund the program through 1987. Support from the City staff increased each year, as did the number of lights displayed and the



*Christmas in the Park, Central Park*

number of visitors to the park. *Christmas in the Park* now encompasses over 500,000 lights and many evenings of special activities at ***no cost to park visitors.***

In 1988, the law firm of Crowley and Waltman (now Waltman & Grisham) graciously took over sponsorship of the

program and once again expansion of the lighting displays and programming was possible. Over 100,000 visitors enjoy the *Christmas in the Park* program each December. The beauty of the park is a credit to the creative City staff who design and hand craft all displays.

**Happy Holidays!!!**